REMARKS

Claim Status

Claims 1-27 and 29-42 are pending in the present application.

Claim 1 has been amended without prejudice. Some of these amendments broaden claim scope (e.g., changing digital watermarking to steganography and changing document to physical object). The remaining change (adding "remotely located") simply refers to the preamble's recitation of the internet. Claims 2 and 8-11 have been amended to even better conform to claim 1.

Claim 14 has been amended without prejudice.

Claims 26, 27, 32-34 and 37 have also been amended without prejudice. Many of these amendments broaden the scope of the claims by referring broadly to an "object" identifier instead of a "document" identifier.

Claims 39-42 are newly presented.

Art-Based Rejections

Claims 1-25 remain rejected over U.S. Patent No. 6,801,999 (hereafter referred to as "the Venkatesan patent"). Claims 26, 27 and 29-37 stand rejected over U.S. Patent No. 5,822,432 (hereafter referred to as "the Moskowitz patent"). We expressly traverse these rejections.

Claim 1

There are many differences between the combination recited in claim 1 and the Venkatesan patent.

Claim 1 is concerned with regulating access to websites. But not just any website. Access is regulated to websites that are associated with certain marked physical objects.

The Venkatesan patent is concerned with controlling use of software objects (see, e.g., the Venkatesan patent at its abstract, lines 1-4).

A few specific examples of how claim 1 differs over the Venkatesan patent include:

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Claim 1 recites: *"at the user terminal, extracting identifying data from the steganographic indicia, and providing the identifying data to a remotely located central computer."*

The Office Action cites the Venkatesan patent at Col. 25, lines 3-5 and 7-8 teaching this feature. We respectfully disagree.

While the cited Col. 25 passage discusses extracting a value of a watermark from an object, it merely provides the value to a <u>local</u> verifier 620. (Recall that the verifier 620 is part of the Enforcer 600 that resides on a client. See, e.g., Col. 22, lines 65-67 and Fig. 4. The verifier 620 verifies a license as having been signed by its issuing publisher and then extracts various parameters from the license. See, e.g., Col. 23, lines 9-11.).

Claim 1 also recites: *"at the [remotely located] central computer, verifying authority to access the website based at least in part on a comparison of the verification information and the stored response information."*

The Office Action cites the Venkatesan patent at Col. 14, lines 6-8, Col. 23, lines 9-12, and Col. 29, lines 1-8 as teaching this feature. We respectfully disagree.

Col. 14, lines 6-8 discuss a "WA" that embeds watermarks into a particular object and sends it back to a publisher. (A "WA" is a watermark authority, which embeds watermarks in content, as discussed at Col. 5, lines 63-67.) But this passage doesn't discuss *verifying authority to access a website* based at least in part on a comparison of the verification information and the stored response information.

Col. 23, lines 9-12 discusses verifying whether a license was signed by a particular issuing publisher. But this passage doesn't discuss *verifying authority to access a <u>website</u>* based at least in part on a comparison of the verification information and the stored response information.

Col. 29, lines 1-8 discuss the WA again, and in particular, seems concerned with returning watermarked content to a publisher for distribution. Again, this passage doesn't discuss *verifying authority to access a <u>website</u>* based at least in part on a <u>comparison</u> of the verification information and the stored response information. (We note that dissemination of the watermarked content may take place over the web. See Col. 29, lines 5-8. However, there is no discussion of verifying authority to access to a website through a comparison as recited. Instead, all requesting client PCs are given a copy.)

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We respectfully submit that claim 1 should be allowed.

New Claim 39

New claim 39 is loosely related to claim 1 and provides a central server perspective of regulating access to a website.

The Venkatesan patent fails to teach or suggest the combination recited in claim 39.

For example, the Venkatesan patent fails to teach or suggest a combination including: a method of regulating access to a website by a user device via the internet. The user device reads an object including hidden steganographic indicia. The method comprising: receiving identifying data extracted from the hidden steganographic indicia, wherein the identifying data was extracted by a remotely located user device and communicated via a network; identifying a pointer associated with the identifying data, the pointer comprising information to access a website; providing at least one component of response information; storing the response information; providing the pointer and response information to the user device, whereby the user device may access the website using at least the pointer and provide the response information to the website; receiving verification information from the website including at least a portion of the response information; verifying authority to access the website based at least in part on a comparison of the verification information and the stored response information; and providing an indication of authority to the website.

Claim 39 stands ready for allowance.

Claim 14

The Venkatesan patent fails to teach or suggest the combination recited in claim 14.

For example, claim 14 recites *"receiving a request to enter the system, the request including at least a verification key,"* in combination with the remaining features of the claim.

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The cited passages of the Venkatesan patent discuss requesting a file download (i.e., Col. 21, lines 55-56) and, *separately*, seeding a cryptographically secure number generator to provide different watermark keys (i.e., Col. 27, lines 10-13).

The Col. 27 passage deals with the WA (watermarking authority) and not the request mentioned in Col. 21.

Thus, these passages do not teach that the request will include a verification key.

(Claim 14 has also been amended to recite that the request is associated with at least a steganographically marked object. This amendment addresses the Examiner's comments on page 12, lines 11-13, of the Office Action, and is not made for reasons of patentability.)

We respectfully submit that claim 14 should be allowed.

Claim 22

The Venkatesan patent fails to teach or suggest the combination recited in claim 22.

Claim 22 recites "a user terminal communicates *an extracted watermark identifier* to said central server."

The Office Action refers to Col. 25, lines 3-5 and 7-8 for this feature. As discussed above, this passage discusses a local verifier, but does discuss communicating an identifier from a user terminal to a central computer, which causes the central computer to identify a corresponding URL with the extracted watermark identifier, and to generate a number, and to store the number and extracted watermark identifier in the database as response information.

The cited the Venkatesan patent passage fails to adequately address this feature.

We respectfully submit that claim 22 should be allowed.

Claim 26

The Moskowitz patent fails to teach or suggest the combination recited in claim 26.

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For example, claim 26 recites "*identifying a pointer associated with the object identifier, wherein the pointer comprises at least one of a URL, IP address and web address.*"

The cited the passages fail to teach or suggest this feature.

The Col. 6, line 24-25 passage discusses an alphanumeric string which names a code resource (a chunk of computer code referred to at lines 22-23), and not a *pointer comprises at least one of a URL, IP address and web address*

The Col. 9, lines 29-32 recites that the watermark itself includes information pertaining to electronic distribution restrictions or information on where to locate other copies of the content. In contrast, claim 26 recites that an object identifier (e.g., obtained from steganographic embedding) is used to find or identify a pointer.

Additional deficiencies of the art need not be belabored at this time.

We respectfully submit that claim 26 should be allowed.

Remaining claims

The dependent claims are also believed to be patentable in their own right. Favorable reconsideration is requested.

Conclusion

The application is believed to be in condition for allowance. An early notice of allowance is respectfully requested. (Applicants need not belabor the other shortcomings of the art at this time.).

Nevertheless, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at 503-469-4685 if any issue remains.

Date: October 31, 2005   Respectfully submitted,

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